

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9712
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 13874

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG IS
SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE ASSISTANT SEC GEN ON PEACE PROCESS

1. DURING CALL BY POLCOUNS MAY 30 ON ARAB LEAGUE ASSISTANT SYG FOR PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS DR. MOHAMMED AL FAR-RAH, HE MADE FOLLOWING CASE FOR DECISIVE U.S. ACTION ON PEACE PROCESS. (DR. AL FARRA, A PALESTINIAN, HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT SINCE ITS BEGINNING. HE HAS SERVED LAST FIVE YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION AND PRIOR TO THAT WAS FOR MANY YEARS JORDANIAN PERMREP TO UN. HE HOLDS JORDANIAN DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT AND MAY RETURN TO JORDANIAN DIPLOMATIC SERVICE AT END OF HIS ARAB LEAGUE CONTRACT AT END OF THIS YEAR. HE ALSO HAS U.S. GREEN CARD AND MANY CLOSE CONNECTIONS IN U.S.)

2. U.S. POLICY. FARRA READILY AGREED THAT POLICY OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION TOWARD MIDDLE EAST IS MORE EVEN-HANDED AND COHERENT THAN AT ANY TIME IN PAST. HE PARTICULARLY PRAISED PRESIDENT CARTER FOR HIS STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE OPENED UP NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR SETTLEMENT. U.S. ACTION IN GETTING ISRAEL TO SET DATE FOR ISRAELI
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WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON, AND GETTING AIRCRAFT PACKAGE THROUGH CONGRESS. ALL OF THESE WERE HOPEFUL SIGNS, BUT IN HIS VIEW PERIPHERAL TO CENTRAL ISSUE OF MOVING TOWARD REAL PEACE WHICH ARABS NOW READY FOR.

3. WHAT NEXT? FARRA HAD NO SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHAT OTHER PARTIES MIGHT CONTRIBUTE. SADAT HAD ALREADY DONE

MORE THAN U.S. HAD ASKED AND GOT NOTHING IN RETURN. THEREFORE, OTHER ARAB MODERATES AND MODERATE ELEMENTS OF PLO LEADERSHIP WERE UNWILLING TO MAKE NEW CONCESSIONS TO ISRAEL AS LONG AS SADAT WAS LEFT EMPTY-HANDED. IN SHORT, IT IS U.S. RESPONSIBILITY. AS TO WHAT U.S. CAN NOW DO, FARRA BELIEVES IT SHOULD AVOID FURTHER PUBLIC DECLARATIONS HOWEVER FAVORABLE THEY MIGHT BE. ARABS ARE "SICK TO DEATH" OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS FROM ALL PARTIES. HE PERSONALLY AVOIDS PRESS INTERVIEWS OR PUBLIC APPEARANCES BECAUSE NOTHING HE CAN SAY IS CONVINCING TO UNIVERSALLY CYNICAL ARAB PUBLIC OPINION.

4. TIME IS OF ESSENCE. FARRA IS CONCERNED THAT U.S. NOW STEPPING BACK AFTER BATTLE OVER AIRCRAFT PACKAGE AND LEBANON WITHDRAWAL AND THAT U.S. DOES NOT REALIZE URGENCY FOR PROGRESS BEFORE OCTOBER. POLCOUNS DISPUTED THAT THERE ANY LESSENING OF U.S. DETERMINATION. FARRA SAID STAGE IS SET FOR U.S. TO COME OUT WITH COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSALS THAT LAY OUT SOLUTION AND PROGRAM FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION. HE RECOGNIZED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER MUST CARRY U.S. CONGRESS WITH HIM, BUT BELIEVES THIS CAN BE DONE BY GOING DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE AS AIRCRAFT PACKAGE HAD PROVEN. IF U.S. WERE TO TAKE THIS DECISIVE STEP, PREFERABLY AFTER CONSULTATION WITH KEY MODERATE ARAB STATES, FARRA BELIEVES IT WOULD NOT ONLY HAVE U.S. PUBLIC BACKING, BUT PUBLIC SUPPORT OF MODERATE ARAB STATES. AT SAME TIME, FARRA BELIEVES PM BEGIN

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IS "HOPELESS" AND WILL NEVER GIVE UP HIS DREAM OF ERETZ ISRAEL. THEREFORE ISRAELI LEADERSHIP CHANGE MAY BE NECESSARY, BUT NO ISRAELI LEADER COULD, IN FINAL ANALYSIS, RESIST DETERMINED U.S. STAND.

5. COMMENT. FARRA'S VIEWS ARE UNFORTUNATELY WIDELY SHARED BY MANY EGYPTIANS. THEY ARE BARREN OF ANY SUGGESTIONS OR IMAGINATIVE THINKING OF WHAT PARTIES OTHER THAN THE U.S. MIGHT DO. HE LOOKS ONLY TO THE U.S. WHILE FARRA DEPLORES LACK OF ATTENTION U.S. GIVING TOMODERATE PLO LEADERSHIP. HE HAD NO SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO STRENGTHEN MODERATE PALESTINIANS. MATTHEWS

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